

The Historacle

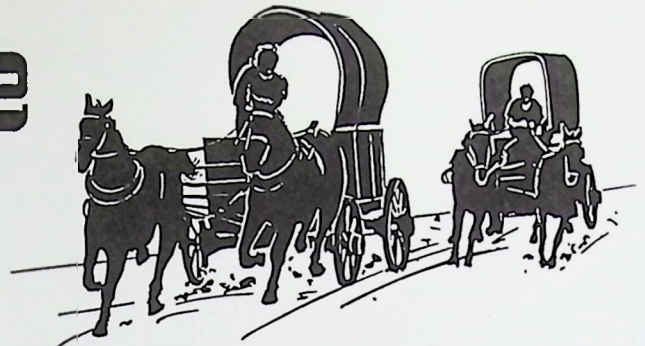
The Official Newsletter of the

Talent Historical Society

Where The Past Meets The Future

206 East Main, Suite C • P.O. Box 582 • Talent, Oregon 97540 • 541/512-8838

July 2000



CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP & HARVEST FESTIVAL COMING

On Saturday, July 29, the Talent Historical Society will sponsor an all-day children's workshop featuring Native American crafts and culture. The day will be packed with fun, information and some hands-on activities.

The activities will include watching and/or participating in such crafts as making cattail mats, beading feathers, making fish net stones, making and playing a wooden flute, learning a friendship dance, listening to Tom Doty, poet and teller of Native American stories, and examining the contents of the Native American Discovery Box.

The day is planned to be of special interest to children, but people of all ages will enjoy the various demonstrations and activities.

Look for the Treasure Chest, purchase a key and see if it will unlock the chest. If the chest opens, you'll receive a nice prize donated by a Talent merchant!

Bring a lunch, or plan to patronize one of the Talent eateries. Beverages will be provided by the Talent Historical Society.

The Workshop will run from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Library Park and the Talent Community Center in Talent. Admission is free, but a \$2 donation to help cover costs will be welcome. Community support of the Talent Historical Society is greatly appreciated.



Capping off a full day of activities at the Talent Harvest Festival, the Talent Historical Society will present a reading of "In The Land Where Acorns Dance," a screenplay by Michael O'Rourke, at MeadowBrook Farm, 6731 Wagner Creek Road, Saturday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m. "Acorns Dance" is based on the life and writings of Joaquin Miller, a 19th century Western writer known as the Poet of the Sierras. Witness to turbulent and unwritten history in the Mt. Shasta region from 1854 to 1864, he relates a stirring epic in a series of flashbacks to his lawyer while in jail at Yreka.

O'Rourke has been researching and developing the project for nearly three years under the guidance of Native historian George Fence, Cherokee and adopted member of the Takilma. O'Rourke is a produced playwright and has an M.A. from the University of Wyoming.

The cast so far: George Fence, Brian Fraser, Becky Jones, Jonathan Farwell, Robynn Rodriguez, and Charlie Kimball as Joaquin. Native actors, singers and drummers are needed. Contact O'Rourke at 535-1990 for more information.

Proceeds from the performance will benefit the Talent Historical Society. Tickets are \$10 general and \$5 students, and go on sale August 9 at Quality Paperbacks and MeadowBrook Farm in Talent, Paddington Station in Ashland. Gate opens at 5:00 p.m. Bring a picnic, blanket, and lawn chairs. Soft drinks, desserts, chairs and picnic tables will be available. There's plenty of parking! Not recommended for children under 12. For information call 512-8838.



ROGUE RIVER INDIAN WAR



AGITATED BY WHITE VOLUNTEER MILITIA UNITS

"Although isolated attacks by Indians and whites occurred earlier, the Rogue River uprising of the Indians began on October 9, 1855, in response to an attack by a group of miners from Jacksonville. Upset with thievery from their camps and with the Indians being off the reservation by Table Rock, the miners, under the leadership of "Major" James Lupton, attacked a sleeping Indian village on Butte Creek on October 8, 1855." Suddenly, hostilities broke out from Puget Sound to the Rogue. The white settlers organized militia companies even though the regular army felt they were quite capable of handling the situation.

The volunteer soldiers had to sign the following statement: "We the undersigned do hereby agree to volunteer into the Service of the State of Oregon for the Suppression of Indian hostilities, to serve sixty days unless sooner discharged, to obey all lawful commands, and receive such compensation as Congress may provide." (Winterbotham, pp. 99-100)

Complicating the situation was a declaration by General Joel Palmer, Indian Agent for the Oregon Territory. He had, in a July 26, 1855 edition of Scottsburg's Umpqua Gazetteer declared all Indian lands open to settlement except those retained as reservations. For Native Americans whose bands in Southern Oregon had not been privy to or who had not agreed to reservation status, the increased pressure on their economic land base was devastating.

A HAIR, BUT NOT IN THE SALAD!

The Woodburn, Oregon, city park may become one of the more famous archeological sites in the nation. Scientists found an ancient strand of hair in Front Street Park. The hair, found in a core sample during June of 1999, could be the oldest found in the Western United States. Inside the dirt clod was a hair 14 inches long...and it was human. It was so old there was no pigment. The layer of soil from which it was taken dates back 11,000 to 12,000 years.

Within weeks, scientists will know whether the DNA in the hair is related to the five founding DNA patterns which indicate groups of Native Americans. The testing is being done at a University of Tennessee laboratory. There is a chance that the hair could indicate a sixth DNA pattern. According to a AP news release, Lori Baker, a doctoral student in anthropology specializing in ancient DNA testing, said, "It could be that we had other people in the Americas that weren't related to modern Native Americans at all."

Good News!

Our application to PacifiCorp for a grant to help us with our oral histories was accepted and we received a nice check for \$2,500 from them this month. Our sincere thanks go to PacifiCorp and Claudia Steinbroner who worked so graciously with Marian Angele to help us get that grant.

If you, or someone you know, would be willing to share your valuable memories of Talent with others, please call the THS office to schedule an interview. Nancy Fox and Poppie Beveridge are our interviewers.

Sandy Miner has generously donated her time and skills to transcribe the oral histories. Your memories don't have to be of the 1800s, even the 1950s have become history. Preserve your memories of the past for your posterity!



Virginia Purdy, a beloved THS volunteer, passed away last week. She will be greatly missed.













HOSTILITIES ON BEAR CREEK, 1853

On August 4, 1853, Edwards Edwards (that was his name), an older farmer living downstream 2 1/2 miles from Phoenix on Bear Creek was killed by Pe-oos-e-cut, a nephew of Chief John of the Applegate Takelma band. Edwards had been absent from his cabin; and when he returned, he found Pe-oos-e-cut in the cabin. Pe-oos-e-cut shot Edwards with his own gun and ransacked the cabin.

Apparently, the murder was an act of revenge for a perceived injustice. A Mexican by the name of Debussha enticed or abducted a young Indian girl from headman Jim's village (Jim was a minor chief of the Takelma) and when Jim and the woman's husband went to reclaim her, they were met by threats of shooting. Walling, in his history of Southern Oregon indicates (p.213) that the "naturally disturbed" and aggrieved husband then "started on a tour of vengeance against the white race, killing Edwards and attempting other crimes."

Colonel Ross, who investigated the situation, concluded additionally that "Debussha had bought the woman, of who Pe-oos-e-cut had been the lover. She had run away from Debussha to Pe-oos-e-cut's camp on Bear Creek, and Debussha with a man named Charles Harris went to the camp "and took her from Pe-oos-e-cut, much to his anger and grief." The very next day Pe-oos-e-cut began killing the cattle of Bear Creek settlers, and also shot Edwards.

Tensions naturally mounted and several other Indians got involved, and several other murders and acts of violence were committed:

-  Thomas Wells, a Jacksonville merchant, was shot near the Berry house on the Phoenix road.
-  Rhodes Nolan, a miner on Jackson Creek, was shot as he entered his cabin.
-  Patrick Dunn and Andrew Carter were wounded while attacking sub-chief Sambo's encampment at Neil Creek. (Sambo had originally lived where the Plaza in Ashland now is. But whites had dismantled his house when they first came to the area. Sambo was up in the mountains with his band at the time.
-  Hugh Smith, John Gibbs, William Hodgings and Brice Whitmore were killed; and B. Morris and Morris Howell wounded after Sambo and his warriors voluntarily "surrendered" and then attacked from within the stockade at the Dunn residence (now across from the Oak Knoll Golf Course).
The survivors of the attack moved to Wagner's stockade at Wagner Creek Crossing.
-  Most abandoned cabins were burned to the ground, as were barns and fences.
-  Local white militiamen attacked a party of Indians at the mouth of Williams Creek in the Applegate Valley. George Anderson was wounded in the leg.
-  The militia attacked and destroyed an Indian village at Sterling Creek on the Little Applegate River.
-  Indians ambushed a militia unit, wounding Lt. Griffin and killing Private Francis Garnett
-  John Harding and William Rose of Lamerick's militia company were killed at Willow Spring just north of present Central Point.
-  Indians suspected of acts of violence were captured and shot by Angus Brown.
-  An Indian child was hung in Jacksonville.
-  Five Indians were hanged on one day on a tree near David Linn's house west of Phoenix.

After all this real war broke out with organized military units arriving from the north to "solve the Indian problem."

INDIAN ACCESS TO GUNS AND AMMUNITION THROUGH BARTER—NOT THEFT OR VIOLENCE

(Editor's note: The material for this article was drawn from Walling's History of Southern Oregon written in 1883.)

Historically, native Americans did not get guns and ammunition by either theft or violence. Walling sums up procurement of weapons this way.

"Everyone of experience knows that the Indians often came into possession of their guns, horses and ammunition through the sale of their women. It is useless to disguise the fact. White men became the eager purchasers, and the Indian, who had traded a bad wife for a good gun, felt equally the gainer. Thus both parties were satisfied and harmony prevailed. But by and by the new-found bride might tire of her white lord, and taking advantage of his absence. . . might run away, seeking again the wigwam of her earliest love. In such a case, the impassive brave awaited the coming also of the white Lothario, whose judgment was warped by affection, and who to regain the society of his bright particular star, would give a second gun. Thus the Indians grew rich in guns, while the white men found their compensation in gentle woman's blessed companionship. . . . This is certainly an easier mode of providing arms and munitions of war than by theft, (even if Indians) were such expert thieves as certain individuals insist. (Walling, p. 212)

Apparently, if this was the common strategy as Walling insists, both parties were "provided arms." and the future suggests even closer relationships than in the past (consider our anticipated water main connection as an example, and the close cooperation of emergency services--police and fire protection, and the operation of the Phoenix-Talent School District, Little League, etc.).

THINKING OF THE DUNKARD CEMETERY

Dear Ancestor,

Your tombstone stands among the rest, neglected and alone.
The name and date are chiseled out, on polished, marbled stone.
It reaches out to all who care, it is too late to mourn.
You did not know that I exist, you died, and I was born.
Yet each of us are cells of you, in flesh, in blood, in bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse, entirely not our own.
Dear Ancestor, the place you filled, one hundred years ago,
Spreads out among the ones you left, who would have loved you so.
I wonder if you lived and loved, I wonder if you knew
That someday I would find this spot, and come to visit you.

----Author unknown



For those of our membership who are unaware of the Dunkard Cemetery, it is located just north of Talent on the west side of Highway 99, near the PP&L substation. Originally, there the Talent congregation of the Church of the Brethren had a church building on the property now occupied by the cemetery, the septic tank business, and the PP&L substation. The church was moved lock, stock and, one can assume congregation, to a site on Granite Street in Ashland. It was then moved again to Iowa Street, across from Ashland High School. The property was sold to the Mormon church, who later sold the site to Ashland School District.

The Church of the Brethren still hold title to the cemetery. The land the church was on came into the possession of one of the parishioners who sold the remaining property for an industrial site. PP&L for years leased the land from the Brethren Church, but later bought the property. The records of the church are in the La Verne University Library in California. All that remain are the cemetery, the insidious Himalayan blackberry vines...and the graves of former Talent residents.

THE MAN ANDERSON CREEK HONORS WAS A REAL WHEELER-DEALER

constructed the first flour mill in the valley in 1854. They ground the first flour in Oregon south of Roseburg. When the first flour was ground, the Andersons hosted a ball which was given in the flour mill itself with an accompanying banquet and celebration. Wheat at that party sold for \$5.00 a bushel and flour for 15 cents a pound. A contemporary writer wrote "but what joy and rejoicing from Rocky Point to the 'Mountain House' (that would be from Gold Hill to the tollhouse halfway up the Siskiyou Pass).

During 1854 E. K. and J. F. Anderson traded wheat for a one-fourth interest in the Ashland Flour Mill which had just been erected by Abel D. Helman on what then was Mill Creek, but today is called Ashland Creek. The Helman and Anderson mill was located in what today is the Plaza in Ashland.

That same year Anderson went to San Francisco and bought a pair of French burrs for the four mill and iron for an overshot wheel to increase the power available. These were shipped from San Francisco to Scottsburg at the head of tidewater on the Umpqua River, the main seaport for Northern California and Southern Oregon. Anderson went from the valley to get the purchases, and on the way back sped ahead of the wagons thus reaching Ashland before the burrs arrived.

However, the wagons carrying the milling materials were attacked by Indians on the north bank of the Rogue River (likely near Vannoy's Ferry at present day Grants Pass, a town that did not exist at the time). The Indians ran off the oxen and the two men who were with the wagons scattered seeking safety. Hearing of the attack Anderson rode from Ashland to rescue his key flour mill equipment. He was successful and the equipment was used until 1891 when the mill was sold to a W.J. Virgin. E. K. Anderson, however, traded his business interest in the flour mill to his brother Firman in 1855 and concentrated on the family farms.

The Ashland Flour Mill was bought and sold and traded innumerable times until it closed in 1908 when the people of Ashland by a 5 to 1 margin voted to use the mill land as a park, the first beginnings of what today is Lithia Park. The old mill was torn down and burned in the summer of 1909.

The Anderson family through marriage was linked to a number of well-known early valley residents: Captain O. C. Applegate married Ella Anderson, the daughter of E. K. in the Ashland Presbyterian church, with the wedding supper being served at the Ashland Methodist Episcopal Church. (The couple's first residence was the Klamath Indian Agency where Capt. Applegate was the agent in charge.)

The Tolman family, of Tolman Creek fame, were linked by marriage in 1884 when Minnie Anderson, another daughter of E. K. Anderson married J. C. Tolman, Jr., son of the Surveyor General J. C. Tolman at the Anderson homestead on Wagner Creek.

The Anderson saga is much longer than this brief peek, but just this little bit shows the reader why Anderson Creek bears the name of E. K. Anderson, early resident of the Talent area.

E. K. Anderson and his brother Firman first came to the Bear Creek Valley in 1851 but were just traveling through. They liked what they saw, and in 1852 came into the valley and took out a donation land claims near Talent. The two brothers immediately planted 12 acres of wheat and

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Comments & letters may be sent to the Editor, **The Historacle**, by mail or by e-mail <talents@jeffnet.org>. Members of the Society receive **The Historacle** free with membership.

JUST DIPPING INTO BEAR CREEK

Bear Creek, once known as Mary's River and occasionally as Stewart Creek, flows from the confluence of Neil and Emigrant Creeks just south of Ashland to the Rogue River, emptying into the backwater of Gold Ray Dam near the Table Rocks

The name Stewart Creek, now no longer used, commemorated an U. S. Army officer who was died near its banks. The creek was known to the Takelma Indians by a name which when translated from Takelman meant "dirty water." The stream flows past Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford and Central Point, and its banks are envisioned to be laced by the Bear Creek Greenway with a trail and public ownership to extend from Emigrant Lake on the south to Gold Ray's impoundment on the north, thus providing valley residents with a stream parkway replete with bicycle and hiking trails along its entire twenty-five mile length.

Presently, the bike path extends from Ashland north to just beyond Talent, and then recommences at Barnett Road in South Medford and runs to the Jackson County Expo park east of Central Point. A project to extend a horse trail from the Exposition Park north along the creek is currently operational with labor being provided by inmates of the Jackson county jails.

The first historical use of the stream by Caucasians was for beaver trapping by Peter Skene Ogden, Hudson Bay Company explorer after which Ogden, Utah, is named. Some placer mining has occurred on Bear Creek and evidence of that activity can be seen in South Talent in the back of the houses just north of the south juncture of Talent Avenue and Highway 99. It is said that 51 mining claims existed on Bear Creek from Jackson Hot Springs to Ashland's Oak Street during the Depression years in the 1930s.

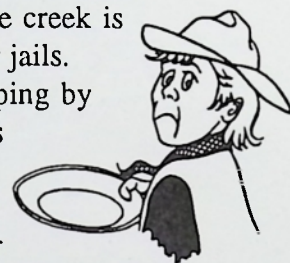
The stream has proven extremely valuable for both water and aggregate rock. In fact the building codes in the valley use the Bear Creek gravels as the standard for gravel in new construction. The stream's water is so important that more water-rights have been issued for Bear Creek water than there is water in the Rogue River itself!

When people speak of the Rogue River Valley, they have really meant the Bear Creek Valley ever since the Hudson Bay brigades traversed the valley in the 1840s on their way to get supplies at Sacramento before the winter snows closed the Siskiyou Pass. The Bear Creek Valley was thought of as the Rogue Valley when Ewing Young trailed his 1500 Spanish cattle north to provide Willamette Valley Americans with the cattle that the British Hudson Bay company would not provide due to its existing contracts with the Russian colonies on Kamchatka. And when the first wagons trailed down Emigrant Creek in 1846 as the vanguard of the settlers came to Oregon by the Southern Route—the Applegate Trail—they called the valley of Bear Creek--the Rogue River Valley. Agriculturally about one-half of the tillable land in the greater Rogue River Valley lies in the Bear Creek drainage. Some 300 square miles of land comprise that drainage area.

The rich loam of the Bear Creek Valley produced the wheat from which the flour used by several thousand miners in Jackson, Josephine, and California's Siskiyou counties during the 1850s and 1860s. That wheat from Bear Creek's soils enriched the farmers in the area--partly due to the lack of rail transport. Until the middle 1870s the counties named above depended almost exclusively on Bear Creek Valley flour. The ability to produce fifty to sixty bushels of wheat per acre from the Bear Creek Valley farms made the farmers in this area among the wealthiest on the West Coast by 1870.



Walling's History of Southern Oregon notes an early visitor to the Bear Creek Valley waxing enthusiastic over the agricultural situation with these words: "This fertile land will produce in abundance anything that will grow in the temperate zone." Apparently he was right. Corn thrives better in the Bear Creek Valley than anywhere else in the state of Oregon. The valley's long growing season even allows the propagation of sweet potatoes which usually are thought to be a semitropical crop. Some claim that Bear Creek Valley onions are of the mildest flavor and are "completely devoid of its usual tear-making qualities."



IN THE 1850S BUILDING ROADS WAS TOUGH

In 1858 news of a gold strike on the Frasier River in British Columbia stripped Colonel Joe Hooker of workers for the military road he was authorized to construct from Scottsburg to Camp Stewart in the Rogue River Valley. (Camp Stewart was located near Central Point and named after a Captain Stewart killed when he and his infantry unit attacked a unsuspecting rancheria of Takelma at the mouth of Antelope Creek.)

Road districts were formed in several Western Oregon counties. Any person appointed to be a road supervisor had to perform that task or be fined \$25. All persons (probably just the owners of property) were liable for one day's work in opening a road in his district, or that person had to pay the district road supervisor \$2.00 for each day's work not performed. The supervisor had to erect "finger boards" at road junctions giving direction and mileage.

INDIAN HOSTILITIES: MANPOWER SHORTAGES

Quite a number of Indians from tribes lived in the Rogue River Valley among the Takelma (Walling, p. 190). Apparently about 25 percent of the native population in the Valley were from tribes alien to the Rogue River Valley according to Phoenix pioneer settler S. H. Colver. During times of hostilities, it is believed that the alien population grew dramatically.

Epidemics of one kind or another were devastating to the native tribal bands. Indian Agent S. H. Colver (Yes, Colver Road!) said that "the loss of the 'treaty Indians' (he means their deaths) collected at the Table Rock Reservation (in 1854), amounted during the first twelve months (the italics are Walling's) to not less than one-fourth of their whole number." In the Indian bands along the trail north—Grave Creek (Sunny Valley), Wolf Creek, and Jump-off-Joe Creek, the mortality was even higher. The force of disease alone very nearly blotted these groups out of existence. (Walling, p. 191)

In light of the manpower problem, and because of the considerable inter-tribal and inter-band fraternization that occurred during times of peace, it is probable, even likely, that the local tribelets were accustomed to reinforcements from neighboring Indian groups during times of war. According to Walling, "the history of Indian wars, almost without exception, shows that the ranks. . . (were) swelled by . . . volunteers from neighboring tribes.

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP & HARVEST FESTIVAL SPONSOR LIST

Many thanks to the following sponsors of gifts and prizes for the Children's Workshop & Harvest Festival:

Main Street Grill
Figaro's Pizza
Quality Paperbacks
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Mei King Restaurant
McQuilts
Hairy Larry's
Bonnie Morgan
Ohlund's Custom Engraving & Crafts
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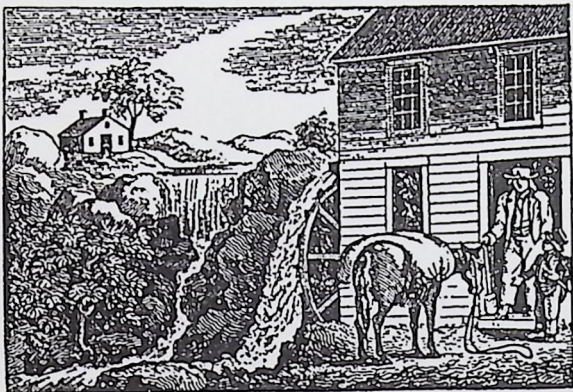
Old Barn Antiques
Kathy's Flowers
The Grotto
As You Like It
DeYoung's Sand & Gravel
Medicap Pharmacy
Pete's Automotive

Additionally, Michael Lawless graciously donated the rental fee for the Native American Discovery Box, now on display at the Museum.



ECONOMIC NECESSITY CREATED TENSION; HUDSON BAY HAD INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTS WITH HAWAII AND THE RUSSIANS TO FULFILL

Although it was the Northwest Fur Company that first established Fort Vancouver just above the mouth of the Willamette River on the north side of the Columbia—date 1821, Fort Vancouver is best known to Northwesterners as the main center of the British Hudson Bay Company activities on the West Coast. In 1823, the Hudson Bay company moved its Pacific headquarters from Astoria to Fort Vancouver, and that site became "the grand emporium of the company's trade west of the Rocky Mountains; as well within the Oregon territory, as beyond it, from California to Kamstchatka."



The Hudson Bay Company operated a 3000 acre farm at Fort Vancouver with corn fields, vegetable fields, orchards, gardens, and pasture including dairy houses. The Fort's agricultural activity included a grist mill, a threshing mill and a sawmill. Besides this farm, the Company operated other farms on a large scale on the Cowlitz River, the Umpqua River near present day Elkton and to a lesser degree anywhere else they had trading posts.

The reason for the agricultural effort was so the company could fulfill an 1839 contract they had signed with the government of Russia to supply the Russian stations in

Kamtschatka. Other supplies were sent to the islands of the South Pacific, sold to British and American whalers, and to other merchant ships.

The company sawed 3000 board foot of lumber a day and shipped it to Hawaii and other foreign ports. The company could sell British manufactured goods as well as Oregon produced fish, beef, mutton and timber products at nearly half the American price of goods shipped around the Horn.

So when American settlers wanted to buy cattle from Hudson Bay, the company had to refuse or they would jeopardize their ability to meet their contract obligations. However, that refusal created considerable animosity from some settlers to the Company. And created a situation that ultimately made Ewing Young the richest man in the Oregon country when he brought about 800 Spanish cattle up from California and sold them to the settlers, securing a 50 mile square piece of land from the hills south of present Beaverton nearly to Salem on the west side of the Willamette Valley with the profits.

As the settlers moved into Oregon, Hudson Bay was faced with a number of difficulties which ultimately was resolved by retreating to British Columbia. However, the southernmost company post was at Yerba Buena (San Francisco). Dr. John McLaughlin, thinking no doubt that the non-fur-seeking activities of the company would bring profits to the firm, had named William Gleen Roe, his son-in-law to a company post in Yerba Buena in 1840. "Four years later, Roe met with financial reverses and began imbibing to excess; this, combined with the pressure of frontier business and politics, proved too great and he took his own life on January 19, 1845." (Umpqua Trapper, Spring Hunt, 1966, pp. 13-14) Roe had married Maria Eloisa McLaughlin in 1838. Prior to his San Francisco appointment he had superintended the construction of Fort Umpqua at Elkton in the summer of 1836. The next year he was appointed to manage the Kootenay post during the trading season 1836-37. He was from the Orkney Islands and had been educated at the University of Edinburgh.

However, the effort to adapt the Company to the changing times failed, and Dr. McLaughlin resigned from the Company and settled at Oregon City. Hudson Bay turned to the north and to the wilderness trading it did so well.

DOWNSTREAM CALENDAR

July through September, 2000

Talent Historical Society Museum,
Talent Community Center.

Museum Open hours:

Tues./Wed. 12:00–4:00

Thurs./Sat. 9:00–1:00

July 2000 All month

Medicap Pharmacy, Talent.

Photo Exhibit, Walking Tour Brochure
Highlights. Pictures and descriptions of
Talent homes.

July 29, 2000 Sunday, 10:00–4:00

Talent Community Center and Library Park
Children's Workshop on Native American
Crafts/Culture

August 13, 2000 Sunday, 1:30 p. m.

Talent Historical Society Museum,

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the Talent Historical Society
directors. Members and general public invited
to attend.

September 9, 2000 Saturday all day

Talent Community Center and Library Park
Talent Harvest Festival

September 10, 2000 Sunday 1:30 p.m.

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the Talent Historical Society
directors. Members and general public invited
to attend.

September 23, 2000 Saturday 1:30 p.m.

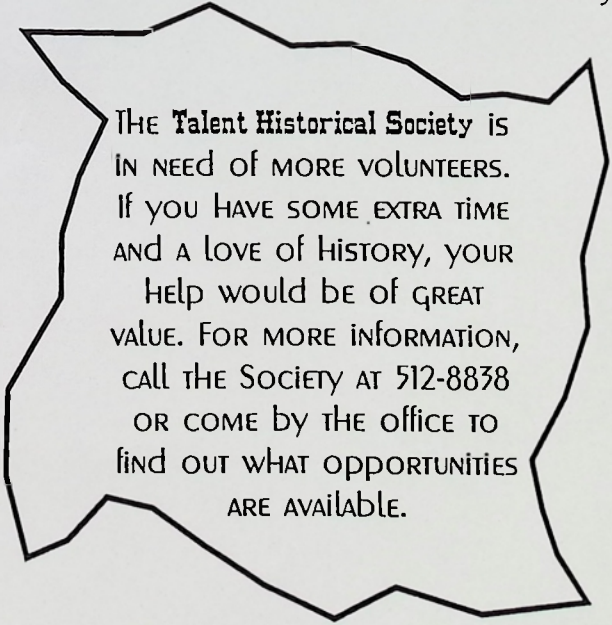
Talent Community Center
Annual membership meeting.

Editorial Continued from page 10

Listen to the Smithsonian's Secretary Adams:
"It is depressingly clear that we Americans are largely
ignorant of our history, and with the persistent crisis
in our schools, we are becoming more so." Museums,
museum collections, and museum programs (like our
planned children's program later this month) do help
eradicate this profound ignorance. As Adams said, "We
can all nominate our favorite villains for the abyss into
which the consciousness of American history has
fallen—television, school text books, multiple-choice
tests, you name it" I would suggest that there is one
extremely important factor at work: human mobility!
Most people are not living anywhere near where they
grew up, or where their parents, grandparents, or great
grandparents lived, loved, worked and died. And that
mobility—most people in the U. S. move every five
years, many hundreds of miles away from where they
were—creates historical numbness. Certainly, most
people blunder their way through life. Consider the
property owners up by Scottsburg who unwittingly cut
down the parent filbert tree which sired the entire
filbert industry in our state, an industry which supplies
80 percent of the world's filberts. They cut it down
because they had just bought the property and the tree
shaded too much of their yard. They did not know why
the tree was an historical artifact. You can say NUTS,
but not knowing what you possess because you do not
know the history of the place is also NUTS.

We here at the Talent Historical Society and
the 14 other local historical societies in Jackson County,
not counting our "parent," the Southern Oregon
Historical Society, are trying ambitiously to help people
know what happened in our part of the world. Why?
So that when we here in the Talent area look at the
future through that rearview mirror, we will have fewer
distortions, and make much better decisions about those
"filbert trees" in our lives.

*~Robert L. Casebeer, member of the Board, Talent
Historical Society*



THE Talent Historical Society is
IN NEED OF MORE VOLUNTEERS.
If you HAVE SOME EXTRA TIME
AND A LOVE OF HISTORY, YOUR
help would be of GREAT
VALUE. FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CALL THE SOCIETY AT 512-8838
OR COME BY THE OFFICE TO
find OUT WHAT OPPORTUNITIES
ARE AVAILABLE.

EDITORIAL



Marshall McLuhan, famous Canadian interpreter of the way media affects our lives, wrote that "we only look at the future through a rear view mirror!" By that he meant that our understanding of our past either clarifies or distorts our ways of looking at what is coming at us. If he is right, we Americans are in big trouble.

Spell that: BIG TROUBLE!

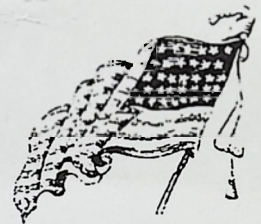
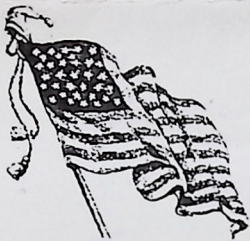
In December 1999 the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut administered a test on U. S. history to the senior students at 55 top colleges and universities—including Harvard and Princeton. There were 34 questions on the test. Here is one of them: "Who was the American general at Yorktown? William Tecumseh Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, Douglas McArthur or George Washington? One out of three seniors got it right! We are talking about great liberal arts colleges like Amherst and Williams and Grinnell and world-class universities like Harvard and Duke and the University of Michigan. More of those about to graduate to lead our nation chose Grant, the victorious Civil War general than chose George Washington, the actual commander at the battle of Yorktown. It was a good thing that the test did not ask for the state in which the last battle of the American Revolution was fought. Our "best and brightest" might have said North Dakota!

Why does this bother me? This is an age where information is readily available. The answers to this and the other 34 questions could be found in any high school, middle school, elementary school, or public library...not to mention the community college, college or university libraries which dot the nation. We have a crisis facing us. Mark Twain said, "There is no substantial difference between a person who cannot read and a person who does not read!" Guess what, our "best and brightest" knew who Beavis and Butthead were!

Harvard President Neil Rudenstine made this revealing statement just recently: "Accessing information is one thing, but there's nothing like talking to someone who is intelligent and imaginative and who is likely to know more than you do." And he is right; technological tools like computers or books only provide opportunity to acquire knowledge. The individual must seek it.

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"If we forget where we came from, we will never get to where we are going!"



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